

as important, we make a promise to care for their families—their wives, their husbands, and their children.

Many of the young men and women who serve in the military enter at a very young age, often before they have children of their own. Like so many other Americans, they have big plans for their lives after their service. Many of them plan to buy a house, go back to school, and eventually have a family.

But in a time when our military conflicts involve roadside bombs, make-shift explosives, and life-threatening danger around every corner, many of our service men and women are coming home with injuries that leave them unable to start their own family.

In fact, military data shows that over the last decade, thousands of servicemembers have suffered injuries that make it nearly impossible to have children. We should be doing everything we can, with the best science and health services available, to help our veterans and their loved ones have children, despite their injuries.

But instead, outdated policies at the Pentagon and the VA are making it harder, not easier, for seriously injured veterans to have children. That is because when severely injured service men and women and veterans seek reproductive health services, such as in vitro fertilization, their military and VA health insurance simply doesn't cover this often very expensive procedure. As a result, the only option for these heroes and their partners to have children is to pay out of their own pocket, often tens of thousands of dollars, to try and conceive.

So today I am introducing The Women Veterans and Families Health Services Act of 2015.

It would basically do two things: First, it would expand the reproductive health services available for Active-Duty servicemembers and their families.

Second, it would finally end the ban on in vitro fertilization services at the VA. I have introduced similar legislation in the past, and, as I have done before, I am going to share the story of SSG Matt Keil and his wife Tracy.

Staff Sergeant Keil was shot in the neck while on patrol in Ramadi, Iraq, on February 24, 2007, just 6 weeks after he married the love of his life, Tracy. The bullet went through the right side of his neck, hit a major artery, went through his spinal cord, and exited through his left shoulder blade. He instantly became a quadriplegic. Doctors informed Tracy her husband would be on a ventilator for the rest of his life, and would never move his arms or legs.

Staff Sergeant Keil eventually defied the odds and found himself off the ventilator and beginning a very long journey of physical rehabilitation.

Around that same time, Tracy and her husband started exploring the possibilities of starting a family together. Having children was all they could talk about, once they adjusted to their "new normal."

With Staff Sergeant Keil's injuries preventing him from having children naturally, Tracy turned to the VA for assistance and began to explore her options for fertility treatments. Feeling defeated after being told the VA had no such programs in place for her situation, Tracy and Staff Sergeant Keil decided to pursue IVF through the private sector.

While they were anxious to begin this chapter of their lives, they were confronted with the reality that TRICARE did not cover any of the costs related to Tracy's treatments, because she did not have fertility issues beyond her husband's injury.

Left with no further options, the Keils decided this was important enough to them that they were willing to pay out of pocket to the tune of almost \$32,000 per round of treatment. Thankfully, on November 9, 2010, just after their first round of IVF, Staff Sergeant Keil and Tracy welcomed their twins Matthew and Faith into the world.

Tracy told me:

The day we had our children something changed in both of us. This is exactly what we had always wanted, our dreams had arrived.

The VA, Congress and the American People have said countless times that they want to do everything they can to support my husband or make him feel whole again and this is your chance.

Having a family is exactly what we needed to feel whole again. Please help us make these changes so that other families can share in this experience.

Tracy does not want to see other servicemembers and their families go through the struggle she and Matt did because of outdated policies that don't reflect modern medicine.

While the Keils' story may be unique, they are not alone. Thousands of servicemembers and veterans have returned from their service hoping to have children, only to find that, despite their sacrifices for our country, they are unable to obtain the kind of assistance they need. Some have spent tens of thousands of dollars in the private sector, like Tracy and her husband did, to get the advanced reproductive treatments they need to start a family. Others have, sadly, watched their marriages dissolve because of the stress of infertility, in combination with the stress of readjusting to a new life after a severe injury, driving their relationship to a breaking point.

Any servicemember who sustains this type of serious injury deserves so much more. They deserve our support to help them start a family, and our support to raise that family.

This bill is so important because access to childcare is one of the most significant barriers to care for women veterans and younger veterans. This bill makes permanent the highly successful pilot program in VA and expands it across the country. I am very hopeful today that both Republicans and Democrats can come together to support this bill.

Just a few years ago we were able to pass similar legislation through the Senate, but, unfortunately, it didn't pass the House in time to get the President's signature and become signed into law. This time has to be different, because this bill is about nothing more than giving veterans who have sacrificed so much the option to fulfill the dream of starting a family. It is a bill that shows when we tell our servicemembers deploying to a war zone that we have their back, we mean it. It is a bill that recognizes the men and women who are harmed in the service of this country have bright, full lives ahead of them.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 250. Mr. HATCH proposed an amendment to the bill S. 295, to amend section 2259 of title 18, United States Code, and for other purposes.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 250. Mr. HATCH proposed an amendment to the bill S. 295, to amend section 2259 of title 18, United States Code, and for other purposes; as follows:

On page 4, beginning on line 22, strike "sexual conduct (as those terms are defined in section 2246)" and insert "sexual contact (as those terms are defined in section 2246) or sexually explicit conduct (as that term is defined in section 2256)".

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 11, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to hold a meeting during the session of the Senate on February 11, 2015, at 9:45 a.m., in room SR-253 of the Russell Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled, "The Connected World: Examining the Internet of Things."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 11, 2015, at 9:30 a.m., in room SD-406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled, "Oversight Hearing: Examining EPA's proposed carbon dioxide emissions rules from

new, modified, and existing power plants.”

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 11, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD-215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 11, 2015, at 2:15 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled “Ending Modern Slavery: The Role of U.S. Leadership.”

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 11, 2015, at 9:30 a.m., in room SD-430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled “Ambushed: How the NLRB’s New Election Rule Harms Employers & Employees.”

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 11, 2015, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled “Risky Business: Examining GAO’s 2015 List of High Risk Government Programs.”

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Personnel of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 11, 2015, at 3 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Strategic Forces of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 11, 2015, at 2:45 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following morning business on Thursday, February 12, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Executive Calendar No. 12, the nomination of Ashton Carter to be Secretary of Defense. I further ask that the time until 2 p.m. be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, and that at 2 p.m. the Senate vote on confirmation. I ask that if the nomination is confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, the President be immediately notified of the Senate’s action, and the Senate resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Democratic leader, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 99-93, as amended by Public Law 99-151, appoints the following Senators as members of the United States Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control: the Honorable DIANNE FEINSTEIN of California, the Honorable CHARLES E. SCHUMER of New York, and the Honorable SHELDON WHITEHOUSE of Rhode Island.

The Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, pursuant to Public Law 96-388, as amended by Public Law 97-84, and Public Law 106-292, reappoints the following Senators to the United States Holocaust Memorial Council: the Honorable BERNARD SANDERS of Vermont and the Honorable AL FRANKEN of Minnesota.

The Chair announces, on behalf of the Democratic leader, pursuant to Public Law 105-83, the reappointment of the following individual to serve as a member of the National Council on the Arts: the Honorable TAMMY BALDWIN of Wisconsin.

The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to Public Law 94-304, as amended by Public Law 99-7, appoints the following Senators as members of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki) during the 114th Congress: the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN of Maryland, the Honorable SHELDON WHITEHOUSE of Rhode Island, the Honorable TOM UDALL of New Mexico, and the Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN of New Hampshire.

The Chair, on behalf of the President of the Senate, pursuant to Public Law

106-286, appoints the following Members to serve on the Congressional-Executive Commission on the People’s Republic of China: the Honorable DIANNE FEINSTEIN of California, the Honorable SHERROD BROWN of Ohio, the Honorable JEFF MERKLEY of Oregon, and the Honorable GARY C. PETERS of Michigan.

The Chair, pursuant to Executive Order 12131, as amended and extended, appoints the following Senators to the President’s Export Council: the Honorable AMY KLOBUCHAR of Minnesota and the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND of New York.

The Chair, on behalf of the President of the Senate, pursuant to Public Law 85-874, as amended, reappoints the following Senator to the Board of Trustees of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts: the Honorable MARK WARNER of Virginia.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2015

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Thursday, February 12; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; following leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the Democrats controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half; following morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the Carter nomination under the previous order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROGRAM

Mr. CORNYN. For the information of all Senators, the vote will occur at 2 p.m. tomorrow on the Carter nomination.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 5:10 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, February 12, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.